Lyomberg

#4

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November

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Of Dysentery.

Cullen defined this disease to be a contagious fever, in which the patient has mucous or bloody stools, with much griping and tenesmus; the faces for the most part being retained—

Except the fact of its contagiousness, his definition requires no amendment.— Sydenhams description of the disease is very accurate, and has been copied by most succeeding writers.—

An attack comes on with chills alternating with flushings, frequent pulse, griping soon follows with a propensity to go to stool.—

In some cases the local affection however is the first symptom. In others the disease is preceded by loss of appetite— constipation- Nausea and vomiting, then comes on Irritation of the bowels = as the disease advances the evacuations become frequent with painful tormina, Prolapsus ani often happens- the tormina and tenesmus are increased— the alvine evacuation is altered becoming frothy— mucous or streaked with blood, and

and in some cases there is Hemorrhage of pure blood.— Sometimes coagulated lumps resembling bits of cheese are found in the stools, when natural faces do appear they are usually in the form of small compact hardened substances known by the name of Scybala, these invariably give the patient temporary ease.— Connected with the symptoms already enumerated is Fever shown by the heat restlessness, and thirst— the pulse is not very full nor active— At this point of the disease terminates sometimes in a few days, but is often more protracted,— if not arrested it becomes very serious and alarming— the pain increases, there is great prostration of strength— the extremities become cold, the abdomen tense— Petechiæ, Hic cough and aphthæ make their appearance, with feeble pulse; and alvine discharge resembling the Lotura Carnium, these symptoms are usually the precursors of death.—

The marks which denote

a favourable termination to the disease are a remission of the attendant fever – the skin becoming moist and relaxed – the stools becoming less frequent and more natural with a diminu=tion of the tormina and tenesmus. —

It was formerly sup=posed that Dysentery originated exclusively in contagion, but this is not the fact, The sound doctrine on this subject appears to be this – that in general Dysentery is not contagious, but becomes so only when connected with a fever of a Typhus character, for if the disease could be excited by exhalation from the evacuations or putrifying secretions or excretions of a patient as was formerly supposed, we should find it divided into as many distinct diseases of different characters as there are different sorts of excrementitious matters. —

The disease is also propagated although the utmost degree of cleanliness be observed

The most common causes are the ordinary sources of our natural Fevers — the taking of acrid articles of Food — it sometimes is produced by the sensible qualities of the atmosphere — alternations of heat and cold — of moisture and dryness — any check of perspiration. — It not unfrequently occurs as an Epidemic — sometimes accompanies catarrh and has been known to alternate with Rheumatism — according to Sydenham a Febris introversa a febrile affection determined to the alimentary canal, assuming the Intermittent Remittent or continued type, and may be either Inflammatory or Typhus. —

This disease usually and when it arises from marsh effluvia always commences in the stomach — afterwards, affecting the bowels and expending its force on the large intestines — Dissections shew us these parts inflamed and otherwise diseased. —

The indications in the cure of Dysentery are very obvious— To reduce inflammation, remove irritation and spasm— to open the bowels and restore perspiration— It is the usual practice amonge medical men to commence the cure with the exhibition of Emetics— I do not believe them in general demanded here— They are better adapted to those cases which sometimes present themselves particularly in Miasmatic countries where the stomach is overloaded— there is gastric distress and symptoms of accumulation of Bile

Blood-letting is indispensably necessary, the early drawing of blood arrests the inflammation rouses the susceptibility of the System to the action of other remedies, and it is the best means of awakening sensibility. There exists here also a violent spasm and constriction producing great pain— In relieving these symptoms Vena Section is unrivalled— The V.S. must be copious to be of any service, to the amount of ℥xx. vel ℥xxx

by it also we produce a relaxation and moist=
=ness of the hot dry skin of the patient

It is right proper to resort to purgatives to cleanse and thoroughly evacuate the Intestines. Castor oil and the Saline purgatives are generally prescribed — But I think the mercurial purgatives infinitely preferable as they evacuate the Intestinal canal thoroughly. — Calomel either alone or with Rheubarb should be administered and if it lingers in its Operation follow it up with some laxative or enema — Now the oil or Epsom Salts becomes proper, and it is considered a sound practical rule to continue to purge until natural evacuations are procured — For while acrid faces remain they will cause irritation and inflammation. —

The frequent and severe griping attending this disease leads almost necessarily to the use of Opiates and they are very effectual

For this purpose, and to effect the two purposes together of keeping open the bowels and removing irritation, prescribe the opium in union with some mild evacuant. — Or should we neglect to determine to the surface, provided that arterial action and general excitement be sufficiently reduced by direct depletion.

Diaphoretics then come in with great advantage and will commonly mitigate or completely arrest the progress of the disease. The following combination answers the purpose exceedingly well. Gum [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] the [illegible] to reject the [illegible].

A great deal has been said of the [illegible], the latter, [illegible] the same [illegible] circumstances of the [illegible]

The [illegible] of the [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

in use, the neatest and most agreeable are the Barley water, Rice water, decoctions of Slippery Elm, Gum Arab: water, Sago Arrow root and Tapioca.—

The patient should observe the greatest caution and regularity in his mode of living, and he should go warmly clothed, as the disease is very liable to relapse from any fresh exposure to atmospherical vicissitudes.—

In crowded places as in Ships Hospitals or Jails and in particular States of the atmosphere Dysentery appears in a typhus form, in these cases it is right to pursue the same course as in the other low States of disease, paying particular attention to the Intestines.—

When this disease occurs connected with fever of an Intermittent character we should disregard the Intermittent fever until the affections of the bowels are cured when we may resort to the remedies suited to fever of that type.—